

Scientific Excellence Implementation Team

Recommendation 2

Implementation Team Work Plan

Recommendation 2: Develop a climate change implementation plan for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) that dovetails with other conservation partners' climate change action plans and specifically provides guidance for conducting vulnerability assessments of climate change impacts to refuge habitats and species as well as direction for innovation in the reduction of emissions and improved energy efficiency on federal lands.

Overview: The goal is for the NWRS to proactively manage and restore land to reduce and mitigate effects of climate change and other stressors on wildlife and habitats, enhance resilience and provide opportunities for adaptation to climate change, work with partners to achieve landscape-level conservation, and provide leadership on reducing carbon emissions.

Deliverable #1: NWRS Climate Change Implementation Plan (CCIP).

- **Description:** The CCIP will be a summary document that steps down goals outlined in *"Rising to the Urgent Challenge: Strategic Plan for Responding to Accelerating Climate Change"* and builds upon the NWRS 2008 draft plan. The CCIP will also incorporate key concepts from the *"National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Change Adaptation Strategy"*. The CCIP will be comprised of sections addressing adaptation, mitigation, and engagement, per the Service's climate change strategic plan.
- **Approach:** NWRS Climate Change Coordinator will lead drafting and editing efforts.
- **Major Milestones:** Draft plan completed by September 30, 2013; review completed December 31, 2013.
- **Coordination Need:** National Climate Team, Inventory and Monitoring Program.
- **Communications:** External communication will be implemented primarily via the web portal (Deliverable #2) and targeted briefings.
- **Success and Evaluation:** evaluate success through actions taken by stations.

Deliverable #1a: Adaptation: *"A Primer on Climate Change and the NWRS"* (Primer).

- **Description:** The *Primer* provides general information on climate change science tools and directions for incorporating climate change considerations into NWRS planning documents. This deliverable will be a revision of an original version of the *Primer* prepared a few years ago.
- **Approach:** In March 2012, a detail to the HQ was tasked with conducting the initial research and initial document revisions. An 85% draft was completed. LEAD: NWRS Climate Change Coordinator
- **Major Milestones:** A review draft was provided for internal science review in December 2012. First revisions will be completed and second round of internal review by regional planning chiefs and implementation team Co-Chairs will begin by April 30, 2013. A final report will be completed by July 31, 2013.
- **Communications:** Internal and external communication via the web portal (Deliverable #2).
- **Success and Evaluation:** Evaluate success NWRS ability to better incorporate climate change into planning documents and improved climate literacy within the workforce.

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Deliverable #1b: Mitigation Strategy.

- *Description:* The Mitigation Strategy will facilitate the continued greening the NWRS infrastructure to meet our 2020 carbon neutral goal. This will reduce the NWRS's contribution to global climate change and demonstrate Service leadership in addressing climate change impacts.
- *Approach:* The Mitigation Strategy will review our ongoing emissions quantification efforts that are required by law and will consider innovative strategies for further reduction of emissions and improved energy efficiency. NWRS facilities and maintenance staff are the critical element in this effort. This staff will require new and enhanced technical training on deployment and maintenance of renewables. Additionally, traditional budgets must shift 25 - 50% toward renewables and heavy equipment must become Tier 4-compliant by 2020. The Mitigation Strategy will also link biological carbon sequestration actions, accomplished and planned, by refuges across the country and will be informed by activities of the USGS Land Carbon Project. LEAD: NWRS Climate Change Coordinator.
- *Major Milestones:* Goals and metrics for NWRS carbon neutrality completed May 31, 2013; draft mitigation plan completed June 30, 2013; final strategy by September 30, 2013.
- *Coordination Need:* National Climate Team, CSWG, OSA, NWRS Facilities and Maintenance
- *Communications:* Internal and external communication will via the web portal (Deliverable #2).
- *Success and Evaluation:* Evaluate success by the carbon footprint of the Refuge System.

Deliverable #1c: Engagement Strategy.

- *Description:* The Engagement Strategy is intended to guide the Refuge System in raising public and partner awareness of climate change and garnering support for Service efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change on national wildlife refuges. A communications strategy will ensure staffs are aware of climate change resources and how to incorporate these resources into their work.
- *Approach:* A subteam is already synthesizing new and existing data and developing a Strategy outline. They are identifying issues and products that need internal and external communications and developing outlines of engagement strategy. LEAD: subteam.
- *Major Milestones:* Data synthesis completed March 31, 2013; products that require communications identified by May 1, 2013; engagement strategy drafted by April 30, 2013; final strategy by June 30, 2013.
- *Coordination Need:* External Affairs, OSA, Visitor Services
- *Communications:* Internal and external communication will via the Web Portal.
- *Success and Evaluation:* Evaluate with metrics in climate change communications survey.

Deliverable #2: NWRS Climate Change Web Portal.

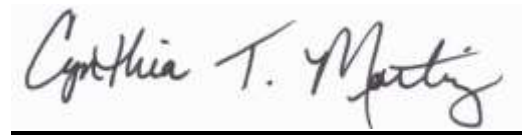
- *Description:* The web portal will be developed in conjunction with other web sites/portals being developed as part of the Vision process. It will provide Refuge-specific information related to climate change.
- *Approach:* Assistance from a web designer will be sought. LEADS: NWRS Climate Change Coordinator, External Affairs.

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- *Major Milestones:* Identification of Refuge-specific climate change communication needs by May 1, 2013; identify IT steps needed to create webpage connected to FWS climate change page by September 30, 2013.
- *Coordination Need:* IT subteam, National Climate Team
- *Communications:* Chief's Corner, Refuge Update, Friends Forward.
- *Success and Evaluation:* Measure success by website visitation and tools available to download.

Approval: [Executive Implementation Council (EIC) approval, signed by Deputy Chief NWRS]



Date: April 15, 2013